DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 211 616 UD 021 740

TITLE Second Year Evaluation of the Title IVc OMAT Program.
INSTITUTION Chicago Board of Education, Ill. Dept. of Research and Evaluation.
PUB DATE Jul 78
NOTE 57p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Change; Attitude Measures; Compensatory Education; *Dropout Programs; *Dropout Rate; *High Risk Students; High Schools; Measures (Individuals); Program Evaluation; *Reading Achievement; *Self Esteem; Student Attitudes; Teacher Response
IDENTIFIERS *Chicago Public Schools IL; Elementary Secondary Education Act Title IV

ABSTRACT

The One Major at a Time (OMAT) dropout program implemented for ninth and tenth graders by the Chicago, Illinois public schools is examined in this second year study. A description of the program includes information on its purpose, organization, instructional methods, student population, and objectives. Data on findings compare OMAT students with a control group of other high risk students in each of the program objective areas: (1) dropout rate, unexcused absences, and discipline referrals; and (2) grade-point averages in major subjects and reading achievement. Also included are summaries of student and teacher evaluations of OMAT. Recommendations for program improvement are given in the areas of inservice program needs, utilization of the reading laboratory, grading practices of OMAT, methods of measuring student attitudes, and selection of control groups. The report concludes that definite progress was made in several areas and cites higher reading achievement and student self-esteem, and lower dropout rates among OMAT students. Appended to this report are samples of the Self-Esteem Inventory test, survey of School Attitudes test, and My Views of the OMAT program test administered to students as well as a teacher perception questionnaire completed by faculty. (ML)

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SECOND YEAR EVALUATION OF THE

TITLE IVc OMAT PROGRAM

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Submitted by:

John W. Wick, Director

Department of Research and Evaluation

July, 1978

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluator wishes to express his appreciation to the many individuals who cooperated to make this evaluation report possible. Mr. Ken Spankeren, the OMAT program Director, and Mr. Jerry Sutton, the OMAT program Coordinator, were most generous in their assistance and guidance in facilitating this evaluation. The suggestions and encouragement by Dr. Siegfried Mueller, Department of Research and Evaluation, and Mrs. Virginia Giles, Administer of Chicago IVc Programs, are highly valued and appreciated.

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SECOND YEAR EVALUATION OF THE OMAT PROGRAM

Introduction

This report is based on the results of the outside evaluation of the One Major at a Time (OMAT) program funded by ESEA Title IVc for the 1977-1978 school year. This project was initiated in September, 1976 and has now operated for two school years.

The OMAT program was established as an educational project to reduce the dropout rate in Orr High School, which is located at 730 North Pulaski Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The school is located in an area where a high proportion of youth leave high school before graduation.

Description of OMAT

The students enrolled in this program were identified as having a high potential for dropping out of high school. The OMAT program in the 1977-1978 school year enrolled approximately 95 sophomore and 180 freshman students. A key organizational feature was the programming of the students into one major subject for four consecutive periods of each school day for nine weeks, or one marking quarter. At the end of this nine week period, the student received a grade and, if successful, a credit unit for one year's achievement in the just completed major subject. The student had one instructor for each of the four major subjects completed during the school year. The major subjects included social studies, science, business, mathematics, and English. These courses were taught by 12 teachers identified as members of the OMAT faculty. The minor subjects included art, music, and physical education which were taught by regular Orr High School instructors.

A. Purpose of the Program. The purpose of OMAT was to provide drop-out-prone ninth and tenth graders with success experiences in both the academic and peer group domains. The first two years of high school are the most critical time for leaving school as a dropout (Wattenberg, 1977). The program organization along with the OMAT teachers and guidance personnel provided the core for helping the OMAT students develop a positive attitude toward school by offering success experiences and personal support to the students.

B. Organization of the Program. The OMAT program included:

1. a program director
2. a program coordinator
3. 12 teachers for the major courses
4. 2 counselors
5. 2 unit leaders
6. teacher aides
7. program secretary (part-time).

Weekly OMAT staff meetings were held with the unit leader, counselors, and the OMAT coordinator, Mr. Jerry Sutton, to facilitate student programming and teacher inservice programs.

C. Students. The students reside in the West Humboldt Park area along with East Garfield Park, North Lawndale, and East Humboldt Park. Schools included in this area are:

Orr High School

Cameron Elementary School

Lawrence Upper Grade Center

Lowell Elementary School

Morton Upper Grade Center

Piccolo Middle School

Ryerson Elementary School

Tennyson Educational and Vocational Guidance Center

During the Spring of 1977, the counselors met with the staff of the feeder elementary schools in order to identify those students who would most benefit by matriculating in the OMAT program. The students were interviewed and their school records were analyzed. Parental permission was obtained before the students were enrolled in OMAT.

The following factors were interpreted as indicators that the student had high potential for leaving high school before graduation. High-risk factors are well documented in the literature on high school dropouts (Lambert, 1978) and include:

1. below grade level scores on achievement tests
2. truancy
3. multiple failures (grade or subject)
4. behavioral referrals
5. fragmented families with history of uncoordinated links to several community agencies
6. frequent family geographical mobility while in elementary school
7. high absence rate.

D. Instruction. The instructional program centered on meeting the special needs of potential dropouts. The classroom teacher was the core of this program because the concept of the self-contained classroom was believed to be critical for the success of OMAT. The teacher taught one group (class) of youth for four periods per day. This arrangement provided the instructor's instructional activities with greater individualization

and flexibility. The students also had their homeroom with the teacher who taught them the major subject for the four periods during the day. This provided students an additional identity with their classmates and teacher. Furthermore, the instructors would have greater opportunities to identify those youth who would benefit from guidance support services.

The following major subjects were available to the OMAT program students. For the freshman, the following major courses were offered:

1. English
2. General Science
3. Law in American Society
4. Arts and Crafts
5. Pre Algebra.

For the sophomores, the following major courses were offered:

1. English
2. U.S. History
3. Algebra
4. Essentials of Math
5. Arts and Crafts
6. Urban Studies.

The OMAT students had an opportunity to participate in reading laboratory. The laboratory sessions were conducted in one school period of 45 minutes over a nine-week span. The students participated in the laboratory sessions in addition to their four major subjects. The instruction was provided by a reading specialist.

Objectives of the Program

This academic year, the OMAT program had two objectives. The objectives, along with the respective evaluation procedures, are listed in Table 1. Students' and teachers' views of the OMAT program were included in the evaluation though it was not included in the evaluation procedures listed in Table 1.

Evaluation

The evaluation design was based on the measurement of the program objectives which are listed in Table 1. The procedures established for measuring each objective are also listed in this table.

The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension--Level 14 was administered as a pre- and posttest to both the OMAT and control groups. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Survey of School Attitudes were administered as pre- and posttests to the OMAT students.

To measure reading achievement, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension--Level 14--was selected. The reading comprehension test was used to measure pre- and posttest reading score gains. The Iowa tests are among the most used in the nation and the results of the validity and reliability tests rank favorably with other major standardized reading achievement tests.

The self-esteem level of the students was measured by the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967). The scale was originally written for fifth graders, though only a slight modification of vocabulary makes it suitable for adolescents. The inventory is easy to administer and the statements are concise.

Table 1

OMAT Program Objectives and Respective Evaluation Procedures

Objectives	Evaluation Procedures
1. After eight months' participation, OMAT students will have a 5% lower dropout rate, 5% fewer absences, and 5% fewer discipline referrals than the control group as indicated by attendance cards and the school's official sign-out or withdrawal lists.	The dropout rate, quarterly attendance records, and suspension records of the OMAT and control groups will be compared. In addition to further measure affective factors, the OMAT students will be administered a Self-Esteem Inventory and Survey of School Attitudes as pre- and posttests.
2. After eight months' participation, OMAT students' grade-point averages in major subjects will be higher than the control group at the .05 significance level. The reading achievement level of the OMAT students will improve more than the control group as measured by the IOWA Tests of Basic Skills --Reading Comprehension--Level 14. Differences will be significant at the .05 alpha level.	The quarterly grades earned by the OMAT and control groups will be compared. The two groups will be compared on pre- and posttest standardized reading achievement.

This scale measures the evaluation which an individual "makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: (self-esteem) expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy."

The Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) contains 50 items, most selected from an earlier scale developed by Rogers and Dymond, Psychotherapy and Personality Change, University of Chicago Press, 1954. The remainder were written especially for this scale. The statements are concerned with self-attitudes in these following areas: peers, parents, school, and personal interests. The instrument is located in Appendix A. The scale takes an estimated 20 minutes to complete. It is self-administered, requiring the subject to check either "like me" or "unlike me" in response to each of the 50 descriptive statements.

Coopersmith found a five-week test-retest reliability coefficient of .88 using a sample of 30 fifth grade children. With a different sample of 56 children, the test-retest reliability over a three-year interval was .70. Suggestive evidence of the scale's validity is offered by Coopersmith where he found positive correlations between: SEI scores and teacher ratings of pupil adjustment, and SEI scores and teacher ratings of pupil adjustment, and SEI scores and sociometric choice. Inverse correlations were found between SEI scores and measures of pupil anxiety.

The Survey of School Attitudes was administered to the OMAT students as a pre- and posttest (see Appendix B). It was a modified version of the inventory by the same title which was developed by Thomas P. Hogan and published by Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich in 1975. The vocabulary of the

Intermediate Level, which was designed for students in grades four through eight, was changed to make it more compatible for high school youth. The Survey of School Attitudes was developed to provide the educator with an instrument to assess students' reactions to four major areas of the school curriculum: reading, mathematics, science and social studies.

Correlated split-half and coefficient alpha estimates are comparable and indicate a relatively high reliability. The reliability by scale generally ranges between .80 and .90. A series of validity procedures were completed and results are considered satisfactory.

Questionnaires were administered to the OMAT teachers (see Appendix C) and students (see Appendix D) to obtain their perceptions of the program. These instruments were administered in June. The attendance records, teacher grades, suspension and behavior data were obtained from school records. The pre- and posttest instruments were administered by the OMAT staff under the supervision of the project coordinator.

Population

The population data for this study are shown on Table 2. At the beginning of the year, 269 youth were enrolled in the OMAT program, and 31, which was 11.8 percent of the total, transferred to other schools. Among the control group, an almost identical percentage transferred. The dropout rate was based on the remaining 238 OMAT and 80 control group youth.

The number of subjects included for study on the various factors evaluated in the study will vary in the remaining analyses in this report. Only those students who completed the school year are included in the analysis of absences (see table 5). Likewise, only those students who

completed both the pre- and posttests are included in the analysis in which change scores were reported. Grade-point averages were computed only for those students who completed the school year.

The selection of a control group comparable with the OMAT students was exceedingly difficult. The group selected included those who were nearest to meeting the criteria for admittance to the OMAT program, but were considered to have higher qualifications than the program students. The accepted procedure for selecting a control group from within all eligible students was not feasible because of instability of enrollment during the first month of the school year.

Table 2

Population Data of the OMAT and Control Groups

Groups by Grade Level		Total Number of Students	Data Population
OMAT -- 9		174	
	Transfers	24	
Total -- 9			150
OMAT -- 10		95	
	Transfers	7	
Total -- 10			88
Total OMAT		269	238
Control -- 9		46	
	Transfers	7	
Total -- 9			39
Control -- 10		44	
	Transfers	3	
Total -- 10			41
Total Control Groups		90	80

Results

The tables that follow show the data that were collected by the outside evaluator since September, 1977. The analysis of findings is organized on the basis of the objectives of the program. The written analysis for each table offers conclusions about the data and points out selected data which offer informative perspectives about the program.

Objective One

> After eight months' participation, OMAT students will have a 5 percent lower dropout rate, 5 percent less unexcused absences, and 5 percent fewer discipline referrals than the control group as indicated by attendance cards and the school's official sign-out or withdrawal lists.

Leaving school before high school graduation is associated with excessive absences and discipline problems. These two factors, along with dropping out of Orr High School, were studies for this objectives to ascertain whether OMAT and control group youth behavior differed by at least 5 percent. The dropout rate of the OMAT students was also compared with the total freshman and sophomore class at Orr High School.

Table 3

Comparative Dropout Rates of OMAT and Control Students

Groups	Number of Students	Number of Dropouts	Percentages
OMAT	238	12	5%
Control	80	5	6.25%

X^2 .22 NS

Table 3 shows the comparative dropout rates of the OMAT and control groups. The nonpersisting rate of 5 percent of the OMAT students was more than 5 percent lower than the control group rate of 6.25 percent. Seven of the 12 OMAT dropouts were sophomores and nine were boys. A chi-square test (X^2) of independence with one degree of freedom found no significant difference between the two groups as to their dropout rates. The X^2 score of .22 is shown just below the main body of the table and NS is identified as nonsignificance.

This year's dropout rate is lower for both groups than last year's rate. During the first year of the program, the dropout rates were 15.1 percent and 16 percent for the OMAT and control groups, respectively.

Table 4

Comparative Dropout Rates of OMAT Students and the Total Freshman and Sophomore Orr High School Population

Groups	Number of Students	Number of Dropouts	Percentages
OMAT -- Grade 9	150	5	3.3%
OMAT -- Grade 10	88	7	8%
OMAT Total	238	12	5%
Orr High -- Grade 9	770	54	7%
Orr High -- Grade 10	699	119	17%
OMAT Total	1,469	173	12%

X^2 6.24 $P < .02$

The dropout rates of the OMAT students and all of the freshmen and sophomores in Orr High School, who were not part of the OMAT program, were compared. The results on Table 4 show that the chi-square test result was 6.24 which was significant at the .02 level. A further observation of this table shows that for both grade levels, the early school leaving rate for the OMAT students was lower than the rest of the youth in their respective grades. This finding is impressive in that the OMAT students were identified as having a high potential for leaving school before high school graduation.

Table 5

Comparative Rates of Absences of OMAT Control Persisting Students by Grade Level

Groups	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
OMAT -- Grade 9	145	36.7	36.5	28.5
OMAT -- Grade 10	81	27.0	30.6	18.7
OMAT Total	226	32.1	34.2	21.5
Control--Grade 9	38	13.9	13.8	9.5
Control--Grade 10	37	20.6	22.6	10.3
Control Total	75	17.2	18.9	10.1

X^2 19.13 $P < .001$

The results on Table 5 show that the overall attendance of the control group was better than the OMAT students on the basis of both the total groups and each of the two grade levels. A median test was performed to ascertain significant differences between the OMAT and control groups on

the total rate of absences. The procedure followed, determined the median number of absences for both the OMAT and control group students. The median number of absences was 17. It was found that 72 percent of the control group and 42 percent of the OMAT students had less than the median number of absences. A chi-square test with one degree of freedom was utilized to determine if the median number of absences between the two groups of students was significant (Siegel, 1956). As indicated on Table 5 the chi-square test was statistically significant at the .001 level.

A further study of Table 5 shows that the standard deviations on the absences were considerably greater for the OMAT group than the control students, which indicates that the absence rate of the former group had greater variance. One student in the control population was absent 86 days; however, 20 students among the OMAT students had at least 86 absences during the year. In fact, 12 of the students missed 100 days or more. On the other hand, 20 OMAT students missed two days or less of school during the year, and 55 missed nine days or less.

Last year, the median number of absences for the OMAT students was 18 days, as compared to 21.5 days this year. The standard deviation was 23.45 last year as compared to 34.2 this year which appears to indicate that students with high absenteeism are remaining enrolled in the program.

Another factor analyzed in Objective One was the number of suspensions and the number of days per suspension by both the OMAT and control group youth for the school year (see Table 6). The transfer students were excluded from the analysis. Four of the 41 transfers (see Table 2) in both the OMAT and control groups were suspended. No dropouts in either group were suspended. Of the 238 OMAT students, 61 were suspended during the year; however, it was only necessary to suspend most of them once.

The proportion of suspended students was about equal for the ninth and tenth graders, though the mean number of days for the ninth grade suspensions was considerably greater than among the tenth graders. The mean average for the ninth graders was raised to some degree as a result of a few students receiving long suspensions and each case the students were repeaters. Last year, a total of 266 suspensions among 329 OMAT students were made, though the mean days per suspension was lower by about two days (4.31 vs. 2.31). Unlike this year, the suspension rate among the control group students was higher than the OMAT students last year.

Table 6

Number of Suspensions and Suspension Days
Among OMAT and Control Groups by Grade

Groups	Percentage of Subjects Suspended	Number of Suspensions	Number of Suspended Days	Mean Days per Suspension
OMAT -- Grade 9	26%	48	250	5.21
OMAT -- Grade 10	25%	30	86	2.87
OMAT Total	25.6%	78	336	4.31
Control--Grade 9	10%	5	12	2.4
Control--Grade 10	20%	10	27	2.7
Control Total	15%	15	37	2.47

The criteria included in Objective One involved an attitudinal component with the assessment of behavioral referrals, absenteeism, and dropout rates. Yet, inventories constructed to measure specific attitudes often provide useful information to enable educators to better understand the

outcomes of educational programs. Two instruments were selected for this purpose, and each was administered to the OMAT students at the beginning and end of the school year.

Tables 7, 8, and 9 show the results by total group and grade level the scores on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI). The results in each of the three analyses and all succeeding statistical analyses for the remainder of this report utilized two-tailed t-tests. Significance will be established at the .05 alpha level, though a .10 level will also be acknowledged.

The SEI change scores reported on Table 7 show that OMAT students scored significantly higher (.01) on the posttest than the pretest. Additionally, significant gains (.05) were found when the t-test results were analyzed by each of the two grade levels (see Tables 8 and 9). This gain is impressive in that research indicates that self-esteem is quite stable (Grinder, 1978).

The remaining inventory administered to the OMAT population was the Survey of School Attitudes. As shown on Table 10, the OMAT students had higher posttest than pretest scores, which were significant at the .10 level. Further analyses by grade level (see Tables 11 and 12) show that both groups of students scored higher on this survey at the end of the school year. In fact, the statistical analysis of the data of the tenth graders indicates that scores on the posttests were significantly higher (.05) than those recorded on the pretests.

Table 7

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Self-Esteem Inventory for the OMAT Students

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	169	33.60	6.54	3.04*
Posttest		34.85	7.19	

*Significant at the .01 level

Table 8

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Self-Esteem Inventory for the OMAT Students in the Ninth Grade

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	109	33.45	6.23	2.26*
Posttest		34.64	7.54	

*Significant at the .05 level

Table 9

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Self-Esteem Inventory for OMAT Students in the Tenth Grade

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	60	33.87	7.13	2.08*
Posttest		35.22	6.55	

*Significant at the .05 level

Table 10

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Survey of School Attitudes for the OMAT Students

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	161	31.37	10.58	1.75*
Posttest		32.62	10.09	

*Significant at the .10 level

Table 11

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Survey of School Attitudes for the OMAT Students in the Ninth Grade

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	106	32.92	10.53	.47
Posttest		33.38	9.87	

Table 12

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Survey of School Attitudes for the OMAT Students in the Tenth Grade

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	60	33.87	10.10	2.08*
Posttest		35.22	10.43	

*Significant at the .05 level

Objective Two

> After eight months' participation, OMAT students' grade-point averages in major subjects will be higher than the control group at the .05 significance level. The reading achievement level of the OMAT students will improve more than the control group as measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension--Level 14. Differences will be significant at the .05 alpha level.

To ascertain grade-point averages, only those students who completed the school year were included in the data analysis reported in Table 13. The grades were compiled for all four quarters of the school year, and the averages were recorded on a four-point scale.

An observation of the data in Table 13 shows that the control group had a mean grade-point average of 1.71 as compared to a mean of 1.44 for the OMAT students. The statistical analysis as measured by the t-test indicated that the difference between the grade-point averages of the two groups was significant at the .01 level. Looking forward to Tables 14 and 15, an observation indicates that the control youth had a mean score of 29.27 (Table 15) on the pretest Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension--Level 14 as compared to a mean score of 22.08 for the OMAT students. A t-test comparing the mean scores of the two groups was significant at the .001 level. It can be assumed that academic performance as measured by grade-point averages and achievement reading test scores are closely related, and that the control group were stronger academically than the OMAT students. This assumption may account to some degree for the direction of the results reported in Table 13.

As just indicated, Tables 14 and 15 report the results of the pre- and posttest results on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension--Level 14 by the OMAT and control groups, respectively. The scores reported are raw scores achieved on the test.

Table 13

Grade-Point Averages of the OMAT and Control Students

Groups	Number of Students	Mean GPA	Standard Deviation	t-test
OMAT	226	1.44	1.02	2.54*
Control	75	1.71	.89	

*Significant at .01

The OMAT students achieved score gains on the reading achievement test which was significant at the .001 level. The control group also made a gain over the school year based on pre- and posttest results, but the difference was nonsignificant. This strong score gain by the OMAT students may have been an outcome of the strong emphasis on reading improvement in the program, along with inservice training for the teachers.

Tables 15 and 16 show the results of the pre- and posttests by grade level on the reading achievement test. The score gains by the ninth graders was significant at the .001 level, while the tenth graders achieved score gains at the .005 level of significance. The results shown on Tables 15 and 16 do indicate that the reading achievement test score gains were quite impressive for both grades.

Table 14

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension for the OMAT Students

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	171	22.08	8.81	6.25*
Posttest		25.63	8.97	

*Significant at the .001 level

Table 15

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension for the Control Students

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	49	29.27	7.47	.85
Posttest		30.25	10.16	

Table 16

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension for the OMAT Students in the Ninth Grade

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	111	20.8	8.43	5.56*
Posttest		24.7	9.18	

*Significant at the .001 level

Table 17

Pretest and Posttest Results on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills--Reading Comprehension for the OMAT Students in the Tenth Grade

Test	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Pretest	60	24.43	9.07	2.99*
Posttest		27.35	8.39	

*Significant at the .005 level

Students' Evaluation of OMAT

Near the end of the school year, the OMAT students were asked to respond to My Views of the OMAT Program. The purpose of this inventory was to obtain their perceptions of the project. The results are shown on Table 18. A total of 167 students responded. This number was composed of 103 freshmen and 64 sophomores. Items 7 and 8 were answered only by the students who were enrolled in the music and art classes. A chi-square test was performed for each item to measure the relationship of the responses made by the freshmen and sophomore OMAT students. Three chi-square tests were found statistically significant, and the results of this analysis are shown on Tables 19, 20, and 21.

On Table 18, the statement, "I like being in the same class for my four major subjects," was favorably viewed by 73 percent of the respondents (see item 1). Furthermore, 90 percent of the youth believed they became well acquainted with their teachers (see item 3). However, a smaller proportion (58%) agreed with item 4, "I like being with the same teacher for each of my four subjects." Yet, over two-thirds (69%) of the students believed (according to item 5) that they had a good variety of instructional activities.

Strong favorable consensus was achieved on the responses to item 6 which stated, "I got to know the other members of my class quite well this year." Ninety-four percent of the students agreed with this statement.

A series of items were directed to more specific aspects of the OMAT program. Nearly nine-tenths (89%) of the youth agreed with the procedure which enables them to receive credit for a major subject at the end of

Table 18

The Students' Views of the OMAT Program and the Relationship Between Freshmen and Sophomores' Views as Measured by Chi Square

N=167

Items	Responses in Percentages by all OMAT Respondents Agree	Disagree	Relationship Between 9th and 10th Grade Responses as Measured by X^2
1. I like being in the same class for my four major subjects.	73%	27%	.44
2. I would like to be in the OMAT program for another year.	66%	34%	7.26*
3. I got to know my teachers quite well this year.	89%	11%	.13
4. I liked being with the same teacher for each of my four subjects.	58%	42%	.10
5. I believe we had a good variety of activities during the school day.	69%	31%	.03
6. I got to know the other members of my class quite well this year.	94%	6%	.14
7. I think getting credit for a major subject at the end of each quarter is good.	88%	12%	1.02

*Significant at the .01 level

**Significant at the .05 level

Table 18 (continued)

Items	Responses in Percentages by all OMAT Respondents Agree	Disagree	Relationship Between 9th and 10th Grade Responses as Measured by X^2
8. I believe OMAT students are given sufficient recognition for outstanding accomplishments.	75%	25%	3.28
9. The OMAT program provides enough time to take part in other school activities.	74%	26%	.59
10. I enjoyed my physical education classes.	76%	24%	.02
11. I enjoyed my art class.	81%	19%	.46
12. I enjoyed my music class.	54%	46%	7.79*
13. I think more students would stay in school if they could attend the OMAT program.	63%	37%	3.99**

*Significant at the .01 level

**Significant at the .05 level

the marking quarter. Three-fourths of the students responded favorably to items 8 and 9 which focused on extra-class activities.

Items 10, 11, and 12 gave the students opportunities to express their views about three minor subjects. The physical education and art classes received strong support. Music classes, which like art classes are electives, were viewed favorably by 54 percent of the respondents.

The students were asked to evaluate the statement, "I think more students would stay in school if they could attend the OMAT program." This item was favorably perceived by 63 percent of the students who completed this questionnaire. However, a chi-square test of independence indicated that the responses offered by the ninth and tenth graders differed significantly at the .05 level, as shown on Table 19. A greater proportion of ninth graders (69%) agreed with the statement than tenth graders (53%).

Finally, the freshmen and sophomores responded significantly different to the statement, "I would like to be in the OMAT program for another year." Overall, 66 percent of the OMAT students (see item 2, Table 18) agreed with the statement. A perusal of Table 20 shows that 75 percent of the freshmen responded favorably, while 54 percent of the sophomores were positive to this item. The difference in these two proportions was significant at the .01 level.

The chi-square test results shown on Table 21 show that the sophomores viewed music classes more favorably than the freshmen. The differences between the responses of the two groups was significant at the .01 level. Last year, the ninth graders gave significantly more favorable responses to music classes than the sophomores.

Table 19

Relationship of the Freshmen and Sophomores' Responses to the Item, "I think more students would stay in school if they could attend the OMAT program."

Grade Level		Responses in Percentages	
		Agree	Disagree
Freshmen	(N-103)	69%	31%
Sophomores	(N=64)	53%	47%

X^2 3.99 $P < .05$

Table 20

Relationship of the Freshmen and Sophomores' Responses to the Item, "I would like to be in the OMAT program for another year."

Grade Level		Responses in Percentages	
		Agree	Disagree
Freshmen	(N=103)	75%	25%
Sophomores	(N=64)	54%	46%

X^2 7.26 $P < .01$

Table 21

Relationship of the Freshmen and Sophomores' Responses to the Item, "I enjoyed my music class."

Grade Level		Responses in Percentages	
		Agree	Disagree
Freshmen	(N=80)	45%	55%
Sophomores	(N=34)	74%	26%

X^2 7.79 $P < .01$

At the end of the first year of the OMAT program, the students were administered the same questionnaire as this year. This year, the responses were, in some cases, more favorable and on most of the other items, the proportion of favorable responses were quite similar for both years.

Chi-square tests were performed to ascertain any significant differences between the responses of this year's and last year's OMAT students. Significant differences were found on items 1, 2 and 13.

Table 22 shows the results of comparing the responses of last year's and this year's students to the statement, "I like being in the same class for my four major subjects. This year's group responded more favorably and the difference was significant at the .01 level.

The statement, "I would like to be in the OMAT program for another year," was viewed differently by the 1977 and 1978 students at a .001 significance level. Again, the 1978 students responded more favorably, as a group, than the 1977 youth. The results are shown on Table 23.

Lastly, the differences between the responses to the item, "I think more students would stay in school if they could attend the OMAT program," was significant at the .01 level. An observation of Table 24 shows that, once again, the 1978 youth responded more favorably to the statement than did the 1977 group. It must be remembered at this point that an overlap in the responding population existed because this year's tenth graders responded to the questionnaire last year. However, on item 2 (see Table 20), it was the sophomore group that answered more negatively than the freshmen this year. The same conclusion is reached when the data on Table 19 is observed.

Table 22

Relationship of 1977 and 1978 Students' Responses to the Item, "I like being in the same class for my four major subjects."

Year	Responses in Percentages	
	Agree	Disagree
1977 (N=198)	58%	42%
1978 (N=167)	73%	27%

X^2 8.64 $P < .01$

Table 23

Relationship of 1977 and 1978 Students' Responses to the Item, "I would like to be in the OMAT program for another year."

Year	Responses in Percentages	
	Agree	Disagree
1977 (N=198)	46%	54%
1978 (N=167)	66%	34%

X^2 15.82 $P < .001$

Table 24

Relationship of 1977 and 1978 Students' Responses to the Item, "I think more students would stay in school if they could attend the OMAT program."

Year	Responses in Percentages	
	Agree	Disagree
1977 (N=198)	50%	50%
1978 (N=167)	63%	37%

X^2 8.73 $P < .01$

Teachers' Evaluation of OMAT

The OMAT instructors were asked to respond anonymously to an eight-item evaluation inventory of the program (see Appendix D). The inventory was completed by 11 of the 12 teachers.

The responding teachers gave strong support to the OMAT program as shown on Table 25. Among all items, only three unfavorable responses were recorded and the strongly agree response was selected slightly more frequently than the agree responses The most positive response was given to item 3 which stated, "The OMAT program provided increased opportunities for individualized instruction." The items (4 and 6) which asked for teachers' reactions to suggested inservice programs on reading and classroom management, respectively, received the lowest proportion of support. Four teachers were undecided about the usefulness of the group guidance sessions.

Summary of Results

OMAT is an educational program focusing on dropout prone freshmen and sophomores in Orr High School. The 238 OMAT students were compared with 80 control group students on several variables. As a result of a series of factors associated with shifting enrollment during the first month of the school year, it was exceedingly difficult to identify a group of students that were comparable with the OMAT students. As a result, a control group was selected that had a history of greater school success than the OMAT students.

The first objective of the program included a comparison of dropout rates, attendance, and suspension rates between the OMAT and control groups. The dropout rate of the OMAT students was 5 percent as compared to 6.25

Table 25

Teachers' Perceptions of the OMAT Program

Item	Responses in Raw Numbers				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The OMAT students developed good rapport with each other as a result of being together for much of the day.	5	5	0	0	0
2. Teaching one group of students over four periods provides greater flexibility in developing learning activities.	4	5	1	1	0
3. The OMAT program provided increased opportunities for individualized instruction.	9	2	0	0	0
4. Increased inservice emphasis is needed for the improvement of reading in the content areas.	2	4	5	0	0
5. Obtaining credit at the end of each quarter for a major subject proved as an incentive for the students to continue schooling.	5	4	2	0	0
6. Increased inservice time is needed to study classroom management which would include discipline and motivation.	3	3	3	2	0
7. The OMAT program provides for greater opportunities for lesson planning.	6	5	0	0	0
8. The group guidance sessions offered during the year were useful to the students.	2	5	4	0	0

percent for the control group. A more meaningful comparison was the dropout rate of the OMAT students with the rest of their classmates at Orr High School. The dropout rate for this larger population of freshmen and sophomores was 12 percent which was significantly higher (.02) than the 5 percent rate for the OMAT students.

The absence rate of the OMAT students was slightly higher this year. The median number of absences for the students last year was 18 days as compared to 21.5 days this year. The suspension rate among the OMAT students was considerably lower this year than last year. This year 78 suspensions were made for 238 students as compared to 266 suspensions for 299 youth last year. The number of days per suspension was slightly higher this year, though only a small number of students were suspended for more than ten days. It is interesting to note that none of the dropouts had suspensions. It may be that the dropouts are not the discipline problems. The OMAT students had a higher rate of absences and suspensions than the control group. The OMAT group had a small number of students who had very high absence and suspension rates.

Two additional instruments to measure the outcomes of Objective One were utilized in order to find additional information about the school attitudes of the students. The OMAT students were administered the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Survey of School Attitudes as pre- and posttests. The results on both instruments indicated that the attitudes as measured by the two instruments improved over the span of the school year for the OMAT students. The self-esteem scores on the posttest were significantly (.01) higher than on the pretest. Significance (.05) was also found for both the ninth and tenth graders when the scores were analyzed by grade

level. To achieve self-esteem score gains of these proportions is an impressive achievement for the program. Self-esteem is considered a crucial factor in school success and efforts were made throughout the year by the staff to encourage youth to perceive school as a success experience. The students' attitudes toward school, as measured by the Survey of School Attitudes, improved during the school year. The improved scores were significant at the .10 level for the total group, though the improvement rate for the tenth graders was significant at the .05 level. These results support the findings on the self-esteem scale scores. These gains do provide encouragement for the OMAT staff in their efforts to facilitate successful school experiences for their students.

The second objective compared the grade-point averages and reading achievement test scores of the OMAT and control group students. The control group had a significantly higher mean grade-point average than the OMAT students. The control group had a mean grade-point average of 1.71 as compared to a 1.44 average of the OMAT group on a four-point scale. Last year the grade-point average of the OMAT students was 1.59. The failure rate, like last year, among OMAT students is still high. Failing high school students in major subjects is a controversial issue with the emphasis on academic standards in today's educational environment. However, failing a major subject does present a student with limited alternatives on achieving credit in the failed course.

Last year, OMAT students scored at approximately the same level on both the pre- and posttest reading achievement comprehension subtest. This year, reading achievement score gains were significant at the .001 level. The control group made small, though nonsignificant, gains on this test.

Significance in reading achievement score gains were achieved for both grade levels in the OMAT population. It is widely acknowledged that reading improvement is a critical component in a dropout prevention program, and this year's results indicate that a good degree of success was achieved in this educational area. The teachers in the OMAT program were made quite aware of the need for reading improvement and inservice programs were developed to upgrade their skills in the improvement of reading in the content areas. The reading laboratory also would have had a positive effect on the students' reading levels and the expansion of this component of the OMAT program is highly recommended.

Both the OMAT students and teachers were asked to evaluate the OMAT program. A reasonable generalization is that both groups strongly supported the program. The students' perceptions of the OMAT program are encouraging in that most of these students have not had a history of successful school experiences. Overall, the evaluation indicated that the OMAT students felt they were an integral part of Orr High School, which is an important factor in this type of program.

Recommendations

1. The teacher inservice program needs continued emphasis, especially in the area of the improvement of reading in content areas. The results of the reading achievement test scores offers much encouragement; however, continued emphasis in this area is needed to maintain and even improve the rate of reading improvement of the OMAT students.

2. The utilization of the reading laboratory should be expanded. The students attended the laboratory sessions voluntarily. Further support of this laboratory program needs attention.

3. The grading and subject failing practices of the OMAT program needs further study. Developmental programs within the contained classroom concept utilized by the OMAT program might provide a means of alleviating the grading and subject failure problem.

4. The measurement of school attitudes has plagued evaluators since the idea of this type of measurement surfaced. An analysis of school attendance, suspensions, and dropout rates gives good clues on school attitudes. Opportunities for students to evaluate the program also gives some indications of school attitudes.

5. The selection of a comparable group of students to serve as controls presents a problem. It is recommended that attendance, suspension, and dropout rates be compared with the rest of the ninth and tenth graders in Orr High School. Ideally, a comparison of grade-point averages would be useful, though this could present data collection problems. A greater dependence on comparing the OMAT students with all their classmates also emphasized the goal that the program students are an integral part of the total school program.

In June, 1978, two years of the OMAT program had been completed. Definite progress was found in several areas. The dropout rate was considerably lower. Reading achievement test and self-esteem inventory scores showed marked improvement over the previous year. Teachers appear to be able to take the advantages that the concept of the self-contained classroom provides. Individualized instructional activities can be given greater emphasis in this type of classroom organization. The goals of the two objectives of the OMAT program this year were generally met and the improvement of the program results has good potential for further gains next year.

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APPENDIX A

SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY

SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY

		Like Me	Unlike Me
1.	I spend a lot of time daydreaming.	____	____
2.	I'm pretty sure of myself.	____	____
3.	I often wish I were someone else.	____	____
4.	I'm easy to like.	____	____
5.	My parents and I have a lot of fun together.	____	____
6.	I find it very hard to talk in front of the class.	____	____
7.	I wish I were younger.	____	____
8.	There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could.	____	____
9.	I can make up my mind without too much trouble.	____	____
10.	I'm a lot of fun to be with.	____	____
11.	I get upset easily at home.	____	____
12.	I'm proud of my school work.	____	____
13.	Someone always has to tell me what to do.	____	____
14.	It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.	____	____
15.	I'm often sorry for the things I do.	____	____
16.	I'm popular with kids my own age.	____	____
17.	My parents usually consider my feelings.	____	____
18.	I'm doing the best work that I can.	____	____
19.	I give in very easily.	____	____
20.	I can usually take care of myself.	____	____
21.	I'm pretty happy.	____	____
22.	I would rather play with children younger than me.	____	____

	Like Me	Unlike Me
23. My parents expect too much of me.	____	____
24. I like to be called on in class.	____	____
25. I understand myself.	____	____
26. It's pretty tough to be me.	____	____
27. Things are all mixed up in my life.	____	____
28. Kids usually follow my ideas.	____	____
29. No one pays much attention to me at home.	____	____
30. I'm not doing as well in school as I'd like to.	____	____
31. I can make up my mind and stick to it.	____	____
32. I really don't like being a boy/girl.	____	____
33. I have a low opinion of myself.	____	____
34. I don't like to be with other people.	____	____
35. There are many times when I'd like to leave home.	____	____
36. I often feel upset in school.	____	____
37. I often feel ashamed of myself.	____	____
38. I'm not as nice looking as most people.	____	____
39. If I have something to say I usually say it.	____	____
40. Kids pick on me very often.	____	____
41. My parents understand me.	____	____
42. My teacher makes me feel I'm not good enough.	____	____
43. I don't care what happens to me.	____	____
44. I'm a failure.	____	____
45. I get upset easily when I'm scolded.	____	____
46. Most people are better liked than I am.	____	____
47. I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.	____	____

	Like Me	Unlike Me
48. I often get discouraged in school.	____	____
49. Things usually don't bother me.	____	____
50. I can't be depended on.	____	____

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF SCHOOL ATTITUDES

SURVEY OF SCHOOL ATTITUDES

Name _____ Division _____

1.	Learning math formulas.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
2.	Finding out how people from different countries live.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
3.	Studying how plants grow.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
4.	Writing letters to friends and relatives.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
5.	Adding numbers to figure out the cost of an item listed on a bill of sale.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
6.	Studying the problems of large cities like Chicago have.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
7.	Studying astronomy. Examples: stars, moon.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
8.	Reading to others in your class.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
9.	Telling which number comes next in the series. Example: 27-36-45-?	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
10.	Learning about things happening in this country.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
11.	Finding out about the living habits of different animals.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
12.	Constructing words that sound alike. Example: puff - tough leave - receive	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
13.	Multiplying numbers involving decimals. Example: 6903.70 x 14.09	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
14.	Finding out what President Carter does during a usual work day.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
15.	Learning about rock and soil formations under the ground.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
16.	Reading stories in magazines and newspapers.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike

17.	Finding a missing number in a math problem. Example: ? + 132 = 136	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
18.	Using a map to learn different locations in a city.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
19.	Working with tools to repair a small item. Examples: toaster, a door, leaky faucet.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
20.	Finding words that have the same meaning. Example: Marvelous = rocky (wonderful) tiny	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
21.	Doing problems using various procedures. Example: 72145 - 9897 62248 534.3	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
22.	Reading books about the history of various countries.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
23.	Studying about how eyes function and how to care for them.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
24.	Reading poems.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
25.	Measuring the size of rooms, windows, doorways, and other things.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
26.	Learning about the best way to travel to California. Examples: whether by air, bus, train, car.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
27.	Trying to figure out what makes an automobile engine work.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
28.	Giving a report before your class.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
29.	Determining how much 1½ pounds of peaches cost per ounce.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
30.	Studying about weather in various parts of the world.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
31.	Learning how propellers move ships and boats.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
32.	Using an encyclopedia to find information about a topic.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike

33.	Solving word problems in math. Example: Three basketballs cost $38.00 plus 5% sales tax. How much does each basketball cost?	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
34.	Studying about the causes of air pollution.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
35.	Studying the characteristics of animals that live in water.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
36.	Learning to spell difficult words.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
37.	Finding out about different kinds of numbers. Example: 15^2, $10xy$, $24_5=14_{10}$	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
38.	Learning more about different kinds of buildings. Example: Sears Tower, McCormick Place.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
39.	Finding out what causes tornados.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
40.	Getting a dictionary as a gift.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
41.	Learning new ways of doing fractions.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
42.	Finding out how our court system operates.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
43.	Learning more about properties of solids, liquids, and gases.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
44.	Reading poetry.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
45.	Multiplying numbers in different ways. Example: $17x12= (10+7)x18=(10x18)(7x18)$.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
46.	Learning more about people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
47.	Finding out about the principles that cause objects to float.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
48.	Making up a title for a story that someone else wrote.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
49.	Learning more about the metric system.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
50.	Studying about famous people.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
51.	Studying about insects.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
52.	Going to the library.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike

53.	Learning how to use charts and graphs.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
54.	Using maps to find locations of places throughout the world.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
55.	Finding out the functions and operation of the human heart.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
56.	Writing papers for class.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
57.	Working with sets in math. Example: A= (o,□) B= o,*,△).	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
58.	Learning what taxes pay for. Example: How much of the tax money goes to schools?	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
59.	Determining how fast a horse is running by using a stop watch.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike
60.	Choosing the best word to put in a sentence. Example: Cheryl is not sad. She is _____.	Like	Not Sure	Dislike

APPENDIX C

MY VIEWS OF THE OMAT PROGRAM

My Views of the OMAT Program

We are interested in your opinions of the OMAT program. Do not put your name on this paper. Below are 14 statements. Circle the answer that best expresses your opinion most closely. The answers for each statement are:

SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree

1.	I liked being in the same class for four major subjects.	SA A D SD
2.	I would like to be in the OMAT program for another year.	SA A D SD
3.	I got to know my teachers quite well this year.	SA A D SD
4.	I believe we had a good variety of activities during the school day.	SA A D SD
5.	I enjoyed my physical education classes.	SA A D SD
6.	I got to know the other members of my class quite well this year.	SA A D SD
7.	(Answer only if you were in Art) I enjoyed my art class.	SA A D SD
8.	(Answer only if you were in Music) I enjoyed my music class.	SA A D SD
9.	I liked being with the same teacher for each of my four major subjects.	SA A D SD
10.	I think getting credit for a major subject at the end of each quarter is good.	SA A D SD
11.	I think more students would stay in school if they could attend the OMAT program.	SA A D SD
12.	I believe OMAT students are given enough recognition for outstanding accomplishments.	SA A D SD
13.	The OMAT program provides enough time to take part in other school activities.	SA A D SD
14.	I will graduate from high school.	SA A D SD

APPENDIX D

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OMAT PROGRAM

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OMAT PROGRAM

Item	Responses in Raw Numbers				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The OMAT students developed good rapport with each other as a result of being together for much of the day.					
2. Teaching one group of students over four periods provides greater flexibility in developing learning activities.					
3. The OMAT program provided increased opportunities for individualized instruction.					
4. Increased inservice emphasis is needed for the improvement of reading in the content areas.					
5. Obtaining credit at the end of each quarter for a major subject proved as an incentive for the students to continue schooling.					
6. Increased inservice time is needed to study classroom management which would include discipline and motivation.					
7. The OMAT program provides for greater opportunities for lesson planning.					
8. The group guidance sessions offered during the year were useful to the students.					